



**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:**

**ITEM \_\_\_\_\_**

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

**00-195**

**SYNOPSIS -**

**AGENDA:**

This is a change to the mechanical permit fee structure (Section 8-147) to reduce the permit fee charged specifically for fire dampers.

MAY 1, 2000

**SUBJECT:**

**FISCAL IMPACT -**

MECHANICAL  
CODE CHANGE

Minor reduction in permit fee revenue.

**TYPE:**

**RECOMMENDATION -**

**RESOLUTION**  
ORDINANCE  
RECEIVE/FILE

**Approval.**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

**BACKGROUND -**

JAMES GRANT  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
DIRECTOR

Mechanical fire dampers are relatively new devices regulated by the Mechanical Code. Presently, these devices are required to be permitted based on a \$7.50 charge per device, as specified in Item #10 of Section 8-147 of the Des Moines Municipal Code. This fee is generally for equipment that is not specifically identified in the fee structure of the Code.

Recently, representatives of the Sheet Metal Contractor's Association expressed a concern that this fee was excessive due to the actual cost of these devices ranging from \$25 to \$400 per device, depending upon the size and make of the damper.

Permit and Development Center (PDC) staff reviewed this request and concurs that the general line item noted in Item #10 of this Code section did appear to require a fee that was not proportionate to the cost of the equipment and the services provided to inspect these devices. These dampers are devices that are placed in firewalls, floors, or ceilings when a duct penetrates any of these assemblies. They in effect close a

shutter to stop fire and smoke from penetrating when excessive heat or smoke is detected. These devices do contain very specific installations in order for them to operate effectively, which in effect require some inspection time on the part of the Mechanical Inspection Section of the PDC. Generally, there are multiple devices installed on a project (ranging from approximately 10 to 100 devices), which are typically inspected at the same time.

The suggested fee structure found in a new Item #12 of Section 8-147 would require the fee for these devices to be \$10 for the first device and \$1 for each device thereafter. In comparison, a project with 50 devices under the present fee structure would be \$7.50 each for a total fee charge of \$375. With the proposed fee structure, the fee would be \$69. Considering these devices are generally installed with other equipment, and inspected while we are inspecting other mechanical equipment, it is not anticipated that inspectors would need to generally be making separate inspection trips to inspect these devices exclusively. With that in mind, the proposed fee appears to be more proportionate to the services provided.

Permit fees found in Chapter 8 have not been updated since 1992. It is the Community Development Department's intention to review the overall fee permit structures, and present to the Council at a later date modification to other permit fees that are proportionate to the services provided. This more than likely would result in a suggested increase in fees in other areas.